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Letter dated 10 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of the written statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by Fernando de la Rua, President of Argentina, on 10 November 2001 in the General Assembly (see annex).

I should be most grateful if you could arrange to have the text of the present letter and the annexed statement circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 9.

(*Signed*) Jeremy **Greenstock**

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Annex to the letter dated 10 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement of the delegation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland in exercise of the right of reply to the remarks made by the President of Argentina in the general debate on 10 November 2001

The British Government welcomes the President of Argentina's resolve to continue the bilateral dialogue on the matter of the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. This will undoubtedly build on the positive bilateral exchanges between our two countries to date, including meetings between Prime Minister Blair and President de la Rua and between our Foreign Minister, which have contributed to mutual understanding.

The Joint Statement signed between our two countries in July 1999 demonstrates clearly that the United Kingdom and Argentina can manage our differences on sovereignty while making progress on practical arrangements on matters of common interest in the South Atlantic.

However, we wish to recall that there is nothing in the agreement that compromises the position of the United Kingdom in relation to its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands: we have no doubt about Britain's sovereignty over the Falkland Islands and the other British overseas territories in the South Atlantic.

We have a duty to respect and defend the right to self-determination of the people of the Falkland Islands. The elected representatives of the Islanders once again expressed their views clearly when they visited the United Nations for this year's debate in the Committee of 24 on 29 June. They asked the Committee to recognize that they, like any other democratic people, should be allowed to exercise the right to self-determination. As the democratic voice of the people of the Falkland Islands, their wishes are clear: they want to remain British and do not want to be part of Argentina.

The British Government remains committed to the joint Statement and, despite our differences with Argentina on the subject of sovereignty, we are confident that we will build on this agreement and that our relations will continue to flourish in the spirit of reconciliation, cooperation and mutual interest.